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Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-07 OMB-01 IO-13 DHA-02

/073 W
---------- 044506
O R 130845Z APR 76
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6565
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 2721

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PINT KS
SUBJ: FRASER TESTIMONY PRODUCES ORCHESTRATED ROK REACTION,
NEWS OF CONGRESSIONAL LETTER STILL SUPPRESSED

REF: (A) SEOUL 2652 (DTG 100356Z APR 76)
(B) SEOUL 2606 (DTG 080929Z APR 76)

SUMMARY: ROKG HAS OPENED A FOUR-PART PRESS CAMPAIGN APPARENTLY DESIGNED TO (A) MAINTAIN THE SENSE OF THREAT, (B) INDICATE USG STILL FIRMLY SUPPORTS ROK, (C) ISOLATE AND DESCREDIT ITS U.S. CRITICS AND (D) AVOID GIVING ROK PUBLIC THE IMPRESSION THAT CRITICISM OF ROK IN U.S. IS EXTENSIVE OR INCREASING. CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED BARRAGE OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS CRITICAL OF REP FRASER'S TESTIMONY FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF WIDE SPECTRUM OF KOREAN SOCIETY IN APPARENT EFFORT TO DISCREDIT ALL CRITICS BY DISCREDITING REPRESENTATIVE FRASER HAS FORMED CENTERPIECE OF ROKG ATTACK. AT SAME TIME ROKG EFFORT TO KEEP STORY OF LETTER FROM 119 CONGRESSMEN CRITICAL OF ROK MYONGDONG INCIDENT ACTIONS OUT OF ROK PRESS IS CONTINUING, ALTHOUGH AWARENESS OF EXISTANCE
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OF LETTER IS SPREADING AND MAY BECOME A PROBLEM FOR THE GOVERN-

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MENT.

1. SINCE APRIL 10 ROK PRESS HAS BEEN CARRYING PROMINENTLY ON FRONT PAGE STORIES (BEING REPORTED FURTHER SEPTEL) ABOUT REPORTED INCURSION OF TWO NORTH KOREAN TANKS INTO DMZ APRIL 7. EDITORIALS AND FEATURE ARTICLES HAVE SENSATIONALIZED THE TANK SIGHTING AS, INTER ALIA, A POSSIBLE PRELUDE TO ABROGATION OF THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT.

2. SIMULTANEOUSLY, PRESS HAS GIVEN PROMINENT COVERAGE TO HABIB/AMROMOWITZ APRIL 8 SFRC FOREIGN ASSISTANCE SUBCOMMITTEE TESTIMONY, DELETING REFERENCES TO HUMAN RIGHTS, THUS PROMOTING IMPRESSION THAT USG, AND BY IMPLICATION MOST PROMINENT AMERICANS, FULLY SUPPORT ROK AND RECOGNIZE BOTH DANGER FROM NORTH KOREA AND NEED FOR STRENGTH TO MEET CHALLENGE. ARTICLES EMPHASIZE, INTER ALIA, U.S. INTENTION TO HONOR ASIAN COMMITMENTS AND "CRUCIAL" ROLE OF U.S. KOREA SECURITY RELATIONSHIP IN MAINTAINING PEACE IN AREA, INCLUDING JAPAN.

3. ROK PRESS AFTERNOON APRIL 10 BEGAN CARRYING FRONT-PAGE REPORTS DATELINED WASHINGTON ALLEGING THAT CONGRESSMAN DONALD M. FRASER, IN TESTIMONY BEFORE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE SUBCOMMITTEE OF SFRC APRIL 8 REPLIED TO QUESTION FROM SENATOR CLIFFORD CASE BY SAYING THAT HE DID NOT THINK IT WOULD CAUSE A "SIGNIFICANT ARGUMENT" IN CONNECTION WITH JAPAN'S SECURITY EVEN IF THE WHOLE KOREAN PENINSULA FELL UNDER NORTH KOREAN COMMUNIST CONTROL. PRESS ACCOUNTS HERE ALSO INDICATE FRASER SAID THE ROK "IS NOT IMPORTANT TO THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES."

4. ROKG HAS REACTED TO THESE REPORTED STATEMENTS WITH AN OBVIOUSLY HEAVILY ORCHESTRATED BARRAGE OF CRITICAL STATEMENTS MADE BY THE DRP, THE NDP, THE YUCHONGHOE, THE KOREA VETERANS' ASSOCIATION AND THE KOREAN TEACHER'S ASSOCIATION, ETAL., CARRIED ON FRONT PAGES OF ALL ROK AFTERNOON PAPERS APRIL 12. ORCHESTRATION HAS GONE TO THE POINT THAT HAPDONG IS CARRYING A WASHINGTON DATELINED WPS STORY WHICH, AFTER RECITING USG AND JAPANESE OFFICIAL VIEWS OF IMPORTANCE OF KOREA FOR THEIR SECURITY CONCLUDED THAT "REP. FRASER'S 'FOOLHARDY' STATEMENT HAS BEGUN TO GIVE RISE TO SUSPICION AND EMBARRASSMENT EVEN IN THE US CONGRESS AS WELL AS THE USG AS TO (HIS) ULTIMATE MOTIVE IN CONFIDENTIAL

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VIEW OF HIS PAST ANTI-KOREAN STATEMENTS." WHEN WE ASKED HAPDONG FOR THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THIS STORY THEY WERE UNABLE TO PRODUCE ONE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT ALL STORIES FROM WASHINGTON COME IN OVER THE WIRE IN ENGLISH. WPS (WORLD PRESS SERVICE) IS A PHANTOM OUTFIT WHICH THE KCIA USES WHEN IT WANTS TO GET SOMETHING IN PRINT.

5. ACCORDING TO THE AFTERNOON PRESS APRIL 12, GOVERNING DRP

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SPOKESMAN PAK CHUL CRITICIZED THE REPORTED FRASER REMARKS AS
SHORT-SIGHTED AND ABSURD, POSSIBLY OF AID TO NORTH KOREA AND
FAR FROM THE ATTITUDE OF USG LEADERS. DEPUTY LEADER OF PRESI-
DENTIALLY-APPOINTED YUCHONGHOE, CHUNG CHAE-HO, WAS QUOTED AS
SAYING THAT REPRESENTATIVE FRASER'S REMARKS WERE "FULL OF PERSONAL
PREJUDICE AND TARNISHED "THE MORALITY OF THE AMERICAN AS THE
STANDARD BEARER IN DEFENSE OF FREEDOM." EVEN THE NDP SPOKESMAN,
HAN BYUNG-CHAE HAS JOINED IN, REPORTEDLY, SAYING THAT HIS
REMARKS MUST BE VIEWED "AS HIGHLY EMOTIONAL AND OPPORTUNISTIC,
USING THE KOREAN PEOPLE'S DESIRE FOR FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS
FOR HIS OWN POPITICAL POPULARITY."

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

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/073 W
---------- 044835
O R 130845Z APR 76
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6566
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SEOUL 2721

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. EDITORIAL AND COMMENTARY COLUMN REACTION TO REPORTS OF REP
FRASER'S REMARKS HAS BEEN EQUALLY HEATED. THUS FAR OFFICIAL
SEOUL SINMUN, THE CHUNGANG ILBO AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
KOREA TIMES HAVE JOINED IN WITH EDITORIALS APRIL 12 IN THE
LATEST CAMPAIGN ON THE FRASER STATEMENT, WITH OTHER PAPERS
(HANGUK ILBO AND THE KOREA HERALD) CONTRIBUTING CRITICAL
COMMENTARIES. MORNING KOREAN LANGUAGE PAPERS APRIL 13 HAVE NOT
CARRIED EDITORIALS ON THIS SUBJECT. EDITORIALS WHICH HAVE
APPEARED ARE ALMOST UNIFORM IN THEIR CONTENT AND APPROACH,

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SAYING THAT FRASER TESTIMONY AIMED TO HURT ROKG AND MIGHT HARM
FRIENDLY ROK-US RELATIONSHIP, THAT CHEJU ISLAND IN HANDS OF
HOSTILE POWER COULD THREATEN PASSAGE THROUGH KOREA STRAITS AND
PROVIDE MISSILE BASE WHICH WOULD THREATEN JAPAN, AND ADDING
THAT STATEMENT HAS OVERRUN WARM FEELING OF KOREAN PEOPLE TOWARD
AMERICA.

7. WHILE CONDUCTING ALL-OUT CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT CONGRESSMAN
FRASER'S REMARKS, ROKG HAS BEEN EQUALLY ENERGETICALLY TRYING
TO SUPRESS NEWS OF LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD AND SIMULTANEOUS
PRESS STATEMENT OF 119 U.S. CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS CRITI-
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CIZING ROK ON HUMAN RIGHTS. DESPITE THESE EFFORTS SEVERAL EMBASSY
CONTRACTS HAVE DISPLAYED FULL AWARENESS OF LETTER AND STATEMENT,
APPARENTLY BASED ON USIS ROUTINE DISTRIBUTION. MILITARY OFFICERS
AT THE MAJOR GENERAL LEVEL, UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS, NEWSMEN,
AND BUSINESSMEN HAVE MENTIONED TO US THAT THEY ARE AWARE OF THE
EXISTENCE THE LETTER. ACCORDING TO A HAPDONG EDITOR THE EMBASSY'S
RELEASE OF THE STORY OF THE LETTER FROM THE 119 HAS HAD A
"SIGNIFICANT IMPACT" IN PRESS CIRCLES BECAUSE THE STORY WAS ONE
THAT THE ROKG HAD TRIED TO KILL, AND MOST NEWSMEN HAD NOT
EVEN SEEN IT BEFORE THE USIS DISTRIBUTION ARRIVED. HE WENT ON
TO SAY THAT THE ROKG CAMPAIGN AGAINST U.S. CRITICS WOULD
PROBABLY BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE BECAUSE IT WOULD RESULT IN FURTHER
LEAKING OF SUCH STORIES TO THE PUBLIC, CONFIRMING THE U.S.
CRITICISM WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAS TRIED TO HIDE. HE CONCLUDED
THAT THE ROKG WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DO SO COULD LEAD TO THE
WIDENING OF THE RIFT BETWEEN THE ROKG AND U.S. CONGRESSIONAL,
PRESS AND INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES, WHICH COULD RESULT IN A SERIOUS
MOVEMENT IN THE U.S. TO WITHDRAW U.S. FORCES FROM KOREA, WITH
PARTICULARLY DAMAGING CONSEQUENCES FOR ROK MORALE. MOFA HAS
ALSO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE USIS DISTRIBUTION GIVEN TO THE
CONGRESSIONAL LETTER, WHICH EMBASSY CONFIRMED WAS GIVEN ROUTINE
DISTRIBUTION, WITHOUT PROVIDING SPECIFICS, DESPITE OBVIOUS MOFA
INTEREST IN WHO GOT COPIES. MOFA EXPRESSION OF INTEREST, ORIGI-
NATING AT ACTING FOREIGN
MINISTER LEVEL ACCORDING TO AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIVISION I OFFICER,
FURTHER STRENGTHENS THE STRONG SIGNALS OF ROKG CONCERN ABOUT
THE DAMAGING DOMESTIC POLITICAL EFFECTS OF THE NEWS OF THE
CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION THAT THE ROKG REACTION TO THE MYONG-
DONG INCIDENT HAS GENERATED. IN CONVERSATION WITH DCM, ACTING
FOREIGN MINISTER YUN HA-CHONG SAID HE WAS PERSONALLY VERY WOR-
RIED ABOUT "FLAGRANT" FRASER STATEMENTS AS POSSIBLY REFLECTING
TO SOME DEGREE WIDER SENTIMENT IN THE U.S., ALTHOUGH HE THOUGHT
FRASER STATEMENT WENT TOO FAR. HE AGREED THE LETTER FROM THE
119 CONGRESSMEN WAS SIGNIFICANT, BUT DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN
IT AND FRASER'S "EXTREME" VIEWS.

8. ACCORDING TO BLUE HOUSE SPECIAL ASSISTANT KIM KYONG-WON,

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ROKG IS PURSUING THE POLICY OF ATTACKING THE "MORE OUTRAGEOUS" AND THEREFORE MORE EASILY REFUTABLE ATTACKS MADE ON IT IN THE U.S. KIM NUMBERED THE WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL COMPARING PAK CHONG-HUI UNFAVORABLY TO KIM IL-SONG AMONG THESE AND COMMENTED
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THAT IN HIS JUDGMENT CRITICISM OF THE ROKG WAS ALREADY WANING AND WOULD EVENTUALLY BLOW OVER.

COMMENT: IN CAMPAIGN REMINISCENT OF ANTI-JAPANESE PRESS CAMPAIGNS WHICH WE HAVE SEEN IN THE PAST, ROKG APPEARS TO BE ENGAGING IN COVER-UP OPERATION, ATTACKING THE FRASER STATEMENT AS MOST EASILY REFUTABLE TARGET AND HOPING THEREBY TO DISCREDIT OPPONENT'S ENTIRE LINE OF ATTACK, WHILE AVOIDING DISCLOSURE OF LETTER SIGNED BY 119 CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS. GOVERNMENT SO FAR APPEARS ANXIOUS TO CONTINUE THIS COURSE SO AS NOT TO ESCALATE US/ROK DIFFERENCES FURTHER. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE GOVT. IS TRYING TO MINIMIZE IMPORTANCE OF U.S. CRITICS WITHOUT CHALLENGING IMPORTANCE OF US/ROK RELATIONSHIP. AS NEWS OF DEVELOPMENT SPREADS, AS WAS CASE WITH MYONGDONG DECLARATION, THERE IS STILL POSSIBILITY NOTED REF B THAT ROKG POSITION COULD BECOME INCREASINGLY UNTENABLE HOWEVER AND IT MIGHT BE FORCED TO PERMIT PAPERS AND MEDIA TO REFER TO THE LATTER OBLIQUELY.
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